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## Congress enacts \$290B farm bill over Bush veto

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS  
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WASHINGTON (AP) -- Congress enacted a massive [farm bill](#) Thursday with new and bigger subsidies for farmers, plus more food stamps for the poor.

But first Democrats had to eat a little crow that dimmed the election-year victory of overriding President Bush's veto for only the second time during his seven years in office.

Omitted from the \$290 billion, five-year law because of a printing mistake was a small amount of money to address a growing global hunger crisis. Democrats only realized the mistake on Wednesday, just before the House voted 316-108 to override Bush's veto.

The Senate joined the override Thursday with a 82-13 vote. Eager to begin a Memorial Day vacation, the issue of helping starving countries was left for another day.

"I take responsibility for what happened here," said a chagrined House Speaker [Nancy Pelosi](#), D-Calif. She said her reaction was "uncustomarily crude" upon learning that the 34 pages dealing with international [food aid](#) and trade were omitted from the bill sent to Bush.

Republicans and the White House accused the Democrats of incompetence.

"It seems that the congressional debate on the pork-laden farm bill is coming to an inglorious conclusion," White House spokesman Scott Stanzel said.

Bush claimed the legislation was too expensive and too generous with subsidies for farmers who are enjoying record high prices and incomes. He had opposed the legislation from the start, threatening his first veto last July.

A bipartisan group of negotiators on the bill made small cuts to subsidies to appease the White House, but Bush said it wasn't enough.

Still, congressional Republicans overwhelmingly abandoned Bush in voting to override the legislation, overlooking its cost amid public concern about the weak economy and high gasoline and grocery prices. GOP lawmakers are anxious about their own prospects less than six months before Election Day.

Despite the bipartisan nature of the bill, the printing error turned a triumphant political victory into a vexing embarrassment for Democrats.

The party's leaders in the House decided to pass the bill again, including the missing section in the version that Bush received. That vote was 306-110, again enough to override another veto from Bush should the need arise.

Democratic leadership aides said the Senate will deal with the problem when Congress

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returns in June from a one-week vacation.

House Republicans berated Democrats for the error and raised questions that the law would be unconstitutional because it was not the full bill passed by the House and Senate.

Senate Majority Leader [Harry Reid](#), D-Nev., said the process was entirely legal.

"We have, under good legal precedent, going back to a case I understand in 1892 where something like this happened before, it is totally constitutional," he said.

Likewise, Pelosi's office released a statement from the House parliamentarian saying the incomplete bill could legally become law because Bush had vetoed that version.

About two-thirds of the law would pay for nutrition programs such as food stamps, which would see increases of around \$1 billion a year. About \$40 billion is for farm subsidies and almost \$30 billion would go to farmers to idle their land and for other environmental programs.

The farm bill also would:

- Increase subsidies for some crops and for the first time subsidize growers of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Extend and expand dairy programs.
- Increase loan rates for sugar producers.
- Expand a program to provide fresh fruits and vegetables to schoolchildren.
- Cut a per-gallon ethanol tax credit for refiners from 51 cents to 45 cents. The credit supports the blending of fuel with the corn-based additive. More money would go to cellulosic ethanol, made from plant matter.
- Require that meats and other fresh foods carry labels with their country of origin.

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The bill is H.R. 2419

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On the Net:

For bill text: <http://thomas.loc.gov>

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